



## Introduction

A lot has been said and written about disability, with a variety of statistics often quoted to support the positions of charities, special interest groups and pressure groups as they pursue their separate agendas. That much of this information is viewed in isolation prevents the reader from understanding the sheer scale and impact that disability has on the millions of people with impairments in the UK.

Over the next few pages we have attempted to bring together statistics from a number of sources covering a broad spectrum of disabilities. The 'actual' number of people with a disability is generally underreported and therefore should assumed to be far greater than is recorded here.

## General

- There are at least 650 million disabled people worldwide.
- 2% of the working age UK population becomes disabled every year - 78% of disabled people acquire their impairment aged 16 or older.
- One in five disabled people in the UK are unemployed but want to work; this compares to one in 15 of non-disabled people.
- At 30%, the poverty rate for disabled adults in the UK is twice that for non-disabled adults.
- A graduate with a work-limiting disability in the UK is more likely to want work than an unqualified person with no disability.

*Source: Employers' Forum on Disability*

- There are an estimated 10 million disabled people in Britain - *The Office for National Statistics, Department of Health, Registered Blind and Partially Sighted People England year ending 31 March 2008*

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- The annual spending power of disabled adults in Britain covered by the DDA is estimated at £80 billion per year - *DRC - Disability in Scotland 2004: Key Facts and Figures – 2005*
- There are over 6.9 million disabled people of working age which represents 19% of the working population - *DRC, July 2008*
- 44% of adults over the age of 50 have a disability - *The Office for National Statistics - Focus on older people 2005 edition – 2005*
- There are 770,000 disabled children under the age of 16 in the UK. That equates to 1 child in 20 - *Contact a Family – May 2009*
- Only 17% of disabled people were born with their disabilities.
- Only 39% of buses are wheelchair accessible, 46% of trains are fully accessible and 29% of the 253 tube stations are 'step free'.
- The majority of impairments are not visible – less than 8% of disabled people use wheelchairs

*Source: Papworth Trust*

- 10.3 million people living in private households reported having a limiting long-term illness in the UK. - *Source: Arthritis.org.uk*

## **Literacy and Numeracy**

- 40% of people in the UK (26 million) are considered to be functionally illiterate, with a literacy level lower than that expected of an 11-year old child - *Basic Skills Agency - The Moser Report – 1999, and, In our view: What Adults can do - May 2006*
- More than 3 million of these adults are in work - *Literacy and Numeracy Skills, The Facts You Need To Know - Department for Education and Skills*
- 1 in 7 people in the UK (9.3 million) are unable to read standard print - *Basic Skills and Adult Education Unit*
- Disabled people are more than twice as likely as non-disabled people to have no qualifications (26% as opposed to 10%) - *UK's Office for National Statistics' Labour Force Survey, Spring 2005*

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## Visual Impairments and Disabilities

- Every day another 100 people start to lose their sight. This figure is based on the average number of people each day who registered as severely sight impaired or sight impaired (blind or partially sighted) in Britain in 2003. *Source: RNIB 27/04/09*
- 153,000 people were on the register of blind people, a slight increase of around 500 (0.3%) from March 2006.
- At 31 March 2008, 156,300 people were on the register of partially sighted people, an increase of 1,100 (0.7%) from March 2006.
- 44,900 (29%) of those registered blind and 43,500 (28%) of those registered partially sighted were also recorded with an additional disability.
- Of those people registered as blind with an additional disability, 4% have a mental health problem, 8% have a learning disability, 60% have a physical disability and 27% have a hearing impairment.
- Of those people registered as partially sighted with an additional disability, 4% have a mental health problem, 4% have a learning disability, 61% have a physical disability and 30% have a hearing impairment.

*Source: Blind and Partially Sighted Registrations (at 31 March 2008)*

## Auditory Impairments

- 1 in 7 people in the UK (about 9 million) are Deaf or hard of hearing
- About 2 million people in the UK have hearing aids, but only 1.4 million use them regularly. There are at least another 4 million people who do not have hearing aids but experience significant hearing difficulties in everyday life. They would be likely to benefit from hearing aids.
- About 3.5 million people of working age (16 – 65 years) are deaf or hard of hearing. 160,000 of these are severely or profoundly deaf.
- In 2004, only 213,900 people were registered as deaf or hard of hearing in England. As there are more than 7 million deaf and hard of hearing people in England (latest figure shows 8.7 million – Papworth Trust),

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and 577,000 are severely or profoundly deaf, it is clear that registers are a very poor guide.

*Source: RNID*

- Only 32.9% of deaf children in England achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\* - C, compared to the national average of 57.1%. On this basis, deaf children are 42% less likely to achieve as well as other children.
- Only 14% of parents were able to get funding to learn sign language to communicate with their child from their local authority. 50% had to cover the cost themselves.
- To have a disability doesn't mean you have learning disabilities and yet many deaf people are treated as such.

*Source: NDCS Briefing on Educational Underachievement*

- BSL was recognised as an official British language on 18th March 2003, but it still does not have any legal protection. Without BSL Deaf Sign Language users do not have full access to vital information and services, including education, health and employment. *Source: British Deaf Association*

## **Cognitive/Learning Disabilities and Mental Illness**

- About 1 million people in England have a learning disability (2% of the population). 796,000 of them are aged 20 or over - *Estimating future need/demand for supports for adults with Learning Disabilities in England - Institute for Health Research, Lancaster University 2004.*
- There are 55,000-75,000 children with a moderate or severe learning disability in England - *Learning disabilities: facts and figures, Department of Health 2007.*
- There are an estimated 210,000 people with severe and profound learning disabilities in England: around 65,000 children and young people, 120,000 adults of working age and 25,000 older people - *Valuing People, Department of Health 2001.*
- Just 1 in 3 people with a learning disability take part in some form of education or training. - *Mencap June 2009*

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- Only 20% of adults with learning disabilities are known to learning disability services - *The Office for National Statistics & NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre 2004.*
- The number of adults with learning disabilities is predicted to increase by 11% between 2001 and 2021. This would raise the number of people in England aged 15 and above with learning disabilities to over one million by 2021 - *Estimating Future Need/Demand for Supports for Adults with Learning Disabilities in England, Institute for Health Research, Lancaster University 2004.*
- The number of adults with learning disabilities aged over 60 is predicted to increase by 36% between 2001 and 2021 - *Estimating Future Need/Demand for Supports for Adults with Learning Disabilities in England, Institute for Health Research, Lancaster University 2004.*
- 1 in 4 British adults experience at least one diagnosable mental health problem in any one-year, and one in six experiences this at any given time - *The Office for National Statistics Psychiatric Morbidity report 2001.*
- Although mental disorders are widespread, serious cases are concentrated among a relatively small proportion of people who experience more than one mental health problem (this is known as ‘co-morbidity’) - *The British Journal of Psychiatry 2005.*
- It is estimated that approximately 450 million people worldwide have a mental health problem - *World Health Organisation 2001.*
- One in ten children between the ages of one and 15 has a mental health disorder - *The Office for National Statistics - Mental health in children and young people in Great Britain 2005.*
- Dementia affects 5% of people over the age of 65 and 20% of those over 80. About 700,000 people in the UK have dementia (1.2% of the population) at any one time - *National Institute For Clinical Excellence 2004.*

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## Motor and Ambulant Disabilities

- 577,000 people in the UK receive benefits as a result of having problems with mobility. *Source: BICPA (Being Inclusive in the Creative and Performing Arts)*
- Arthritis affects 1 in 5 adults in the UK.
- 12,000 children in the UK have juvenile idiopathic arthritis.
- One in four of all GP consultations in the UK relates to a musculoskeletal problem (arthritis).
- At least 4.4 million people in the UK have X-ray evidence of moderate to severe osteoarthritis in their hands; 550,000 have moderate to severe osteoarthritis in their knees; and 210,000 have moderate to severe osteoarthritis of the hips.
- 6% of adults aged 30 and above have frequent knee pain and radiographic osteoarthritis.
- Obesity is a major risk factor for osteoarthritis of the knee. The UK currently has the eighth highest obesity rate in the world - and this is rising
- For each pound of bodyweight lost, there is a 4 pound reduction in knee stress among overweight and obese people with osteoarthritis of the knee
- The prevalent rate of arthritis in women (227/1000) is twice that of men (113/1000)
- 10.3 million people living in private households reported having a limiting long-term illness in the UK.
- The most common long-term condition in the UK is arthritis (28%) followed by heart conditions (16.8%).

*Source: Arthritiscare.org.uk*

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